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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO.

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Indochina

DATE DISTR. 16 July 1951

SUBJECT Democratic Republic of Vietnam Estimate of French
Losses in the Ha Nam-Nam Dinh-Ninh Binh Offensive
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DRV Strategy

1. The recent Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) offensive in the Ha Nam-Nam Dinh-Ninh Binh area of Tonkin is exemplary of the current strategy of the DRV High Command. Because the French are forced to disperse their troops over a large area for occupation duty, the DRV is able to take advantage of their limited reserves to stage lightning attacks on poorly fortified areas, destroy the existing forces and withdraw on the arrival of French reinforcements. According to the slogan "Cong Kien Chien", designed to protect regular army forces, the DRV avoids pitched battle, leaving regional and guerrilla forces to conclude an attack with harassing actions.
2. This strategy was employed successfully at the beginning of the Ninh Binh-Phu Ly campaign, when DRV forces inflicted considerable damage on French posts and withdrew shortly afterwards. It appears, however, that subsequent French bombardment of Ninh Binh and Chi Ne destroyed the last DRV convoys engaged in removing salt and paddy which had been previously stocked by DRV partisans in the area.

French Losses

3. French posts destroyed during the Ha Nam-Nam Dinh-Ninh Binh offensive are as follows:

Ninh Binh sector

Vo Giang, southwest of Phu Ly
Huong Cong
Yen Ve, south of Ninh Binh
Chua Dan, southeast of Ninh Binh
Co Da
Cau Sat, southeast of Phu Ly
Ben Khanh
Yen Mo Thuong
Tuy Loc, south of Ninh Binh
Lan Khe

2 infantry companies; 1 naval infantry company
1 company
1 company
1 company
2 sections
2 sections
1 section
1 section
1 section
1 section
1 section

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4. The following French posts were abandoned after they were surrounded by DRV forces: Doan Vy ferry, Dien Ninh, Yen Thinh, Phuong Nai, Yen Luu Thuong, Chua Huu, Ben Do La, Ha Gia, Cau Rao, Vinh Kha, and Van Mong. Two-thirds of the French forces at Kim Mo and Yen Khanh retreated to Kim Son (106-39, 20-42), north of Phat Diem.
5. French casualties, excluding wounded, totalled 950 killed and 425 taken prisoner. These included the following:
 - a) 2 sections of "commando chasseurs" reinforcements, which arrived at Ninh Binh on 10 May.
 - b) 2 sections of artillery and troops of 5 amphibious tanks and 2 jeeps burned at Mai Cau, north of the Doan Vy ferry, on 29 May.
 - c) 100 infantrymen at So Kien, 8 kilometers from Phu Ly.
 - d) 1 company from an LCI and 2 motor boats sunk in the Day and Vac Rivers.
 - e) 2 sections retreating from Yen Thinh
6. French armament losses included the following:
 - 594 rifles
 - 5 heavy machine guns
 - 42 automatic rifles
 - 53 light machine guns
 - 9 x 60 mm and 81 mm mortars
 - 16 cases of 60 mm mortar shells
 - 1 case of 81 mm mortar shells
 - 80,000 cartridges of different sizes

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